

### REMARKS

At the outset, the Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The final Office Action dated June 14, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1-6 are hereby amended. Accordingly, claims 1-6 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

The Applicants thank the Examiner for taking the time to speak with the Applicants' Representatives on August 10, 2006. The substance of the interview is set forth in the Remarks and constitutes a record of the interview. We discussed amending claims 1-6 as presented above to more clearly define how the warm air is introduced into the drum during the simultaneous dewatering and first drying steps. The Examiner clearly stated that in his opinion the amendments do not overcome the prior art of record. The Applicants disagreed for the reasons set forth below. Since the Examiner believes the above amendments do not overcome the prior art of record, the Applicants request that the amendments be entered so the Applicants can now appeal and advance prosecution.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,489,455 to *Spendel* (hereinafter "*Spendel*"). The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As required in Chapter 2131 of the M.P.E.P., in order to anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. §102, "the reference must teach every element of the claim." The Applicants respectfully submit that *Spendel* does not teach every element recited in claims 1-6 and therefore cannot anticipate these claims. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite a method of controlling a combination washer dryer which includes "simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the washing and rinsing steps, wherein the first drying step includes re-circulating warm air through a conduit, and wherein the warm air passes from the drum into the conduit and is returned to the drum." Claim 4 has been amended to recite a method of washing clothes with a combination washer dryer which includes "performing a first drying operation where warm air is re-circulated through a conduit, wherein the warm air passes

from the drum into the conduit and is returned to the drum during the first drying operation, and wherein the dewatering operation and the first drying operation are simultaneously performed.” *Spendel* fails to disclose these features.

The Office Action alleges that *Spendel* discloses circulating air in all steps prior to the last drying step. More specifically, the Office Action infers that *Spendel* implicitly discloses simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step as required by claims 1 and 4. The Examiner specifically points to column 8, line 6-column 9, line 21 and column 14, lines 18-35. See page 3 of the Office Action. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

*Spendel* fails to teach or suggest “simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the washing and rinsing steps, wherein the first drying step includes re-circulating warm air through a conduit, and wherein the warm air passes from the drum into the conduit and is returned to the drum.” In fact, *Spendel* fails to disclose any instance of “simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step.” What *Spendel* does teach is a laundering cycle, a rinsing cycle and a drying cycle. Heated air is re-circulated during the laundering cycle (see column 8, lines 53-57) and during the drying cycle (see column 14, lines 18-23). *Spendel* further discloses removing rinse water from the drum (the dewatering step of *Spendel*) following the final rinse. See column 13, lines 49-53. Nowhere does *Spendel* even suggest that the heated air is re-circulated during the process of removing rinse water from the drum. If the Examiner maintains that *Spendel* does teach re-circulating warm air during the removal of the rinse water, the Applicants request the Examiner specifically indicate where this is explicitly discussed.

For at least the aforementioned reason, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 4 are patentably distinguishable over *Spendel*, and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claims 2, 3, 5 and 6, which variously depend from claims 1 and 4 are also patentable for at least the same reason.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication Application No. 2001/015082 to *Minayoshi et al.* (hereinafter “*Minayoshi*”). The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Applicants respectfully submit that *Minayoshi* does not teach every element recited in claims 1-6 and therefore cannot anticipate these claims. As stated above, claim 1 has been amended to recite a method of controlling a combination washer dryer which includes “simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the washing and rinsing steps, wherein the first drying step includes re-circulating warm air through a conduit, and wherein the warm air passes from the drum into the conduit and is returned to the drum.” Also, as stated, claim 4 has been amended to recite a method of washing clothes with a combination washer dryer which includes “performing a first drying operation where warm air is re-circulated through a conduit, wherein the warm air passes from the drum into the conduit and is returned to the drum during the first drying operation, and wherein the dewatering operation and the first drying operation are simultaneously performed.”

*Minayoshi* fails to disclose these features. More specifically, *Minayoshi* fails to teach or suggest “re-circulating warm air through a conduit, wherein the warm air passes from the drum into the conduit and is returned to the drum during the first drying operation.” Rather, *Minayoshi* teaches that the circulation-path switching valve is closed during the hydro-extraction process (the dewatering step of *Minayoshi*) and is opened only after the drying process (the second drying process of *Minayoshi*) is initiated. See page 3, paragraph 49. When the switching valve is closed, it is not possible for air to pass from the drum, through the conduit and back into the drum during the first drying operation. The reason for this is, the closed valve blocks (i.e. closes off) the conduit. See Figure 1. The Examiner has asserted just the opposite, that is, the switching valve of *Minayoshi* is open during the hydro-extraction process. The Applicants disagree. In fact, this cannot be true. If the switching valve is open during the hydro-extraction process, water will leak from the condensation extraction hole and producing an undesirable large pool of water under the washing machine.

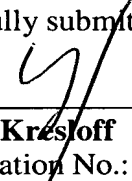
For at least the aforementioned reasons, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 4 are patentably distinguishable over *Minayoshi*, and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claims 2, 3, 5 and 6, which variously depend from claims 1 and 4 are also patentable for at least the same reasons.

The application is in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. Again, if the Examiner maintains his position that the aforementioned amendments do not distinguish over the prior art of record, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the Amendments so the Applicants can appeal and move prosecution forward. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: September 14, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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